

## Venezuela: pro-imperialist referendum drive falters

U.S.-backed Colombian army deployment becomes more provocative

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

The drive by large sections of Venezuela's capitalist class to force a referendum to recall the country's president Hugo Chávez shows signs of faltering.

Opposition groups carried out small, violent protests in Caracas and other Venezuelan cities in the days before and after the March 2 announcement by the National Electoral Council (CNE) that only about half the signatures on petitions demanding such a referendum were valid.

Following an antigovernment demonstration of more than 200,000 in Caracas March 6, however, the pro-imperialist opposition seemed divided on what steps to take next.

Leaders of Coordinadora Democrática, the opposition coalition backed by Washington, appealed for calm and pleaded with U.S. and other imperialist "experts" in the country to pressure the government to allow a recall vote.

Washington, which has backed the two-year-long drive to oust the elected government, has so far made low-key statements about the CNE decision.

"We will work with the Organization of American States to help ensure the integrity of the presidential recall and referendum process under way in Venezuela," said U.S. president George Bush during a March 6 news conference at his Crawford, Texas, ranch.

At the same time, the Pentagon has been moving ahead with arming, training, and



Jorge Silva/Reuters

**Thousands in Caracas, Venezuela, celebrate March 2 announcement by elections council that nearly half the signatures are invalid on petition organized by the pro-imperialist opposition to hold a referendum to unseat President Hugo Chávez.**

advising Colombia's military in preparation for a possible armed provocation against neighboring Venezuela. According to a March 6 press release by the National Liberation Army (ELN), one of the

groups waging guerrilla warfare against the government in Bogotá, Colombia's armed forces have recently deployed several divisions, equipped with heavy AMX30 tanks

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## Workers face job losses in U.S. economic recovery

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The latest government labor force figures show that workers in the United States face continued high unemployment on the one hand, and more speedup of production for those with jobs, on the other.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor's report, just 21,000 workers were added to payrolls in February, as the "jobless recovery" continued. That's far below the 150,000 additional jobs that economists estimate are needed each month to keep pace with growth in the workforce and to hold unemployment at its current official

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## Utah miners reject ploy by bosses to undercut coal strike

BY GUILLERMO ESQUIVEL

HUNTINGTON, Utah—Coal miners on strike here at the Co-Op mine have rejected the latest company ploy against their struggle for recognition of the United Mine Workers of America. The probe consists of a letter from the bosses telling strikers they must either report back to work or "you will have no further rights with respect to present or future employment or compensation."

"They are just promising to put our names on a list and maybe giving a few of us jobs in the next six months," said striker Gonzalo Salazar. "We all agreed this deserves no response." Having been on strike for nearly six months, the miners aren't going to let themselves be tricked now, he said.

On Sept. 22, 2003, CW Mining—also known as Co-Op—fired all the production workers after they protested unsafe working conditions and demanded the reversal of the suspension of a co-worker. The bosses refused to talk to a delegation of miners and instead called on Emery County sheriff's deputies to kick them off

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## Haiti: U.S. gov't seeks to patch together new regime in wake of rightist takeover

BY SETH GALINSKY

MIAMI—With U.S. and French troops policing the streets, rightist forces organized a march through downtown Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital, on March 7 to assert their influence in the wake of their ouster of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

U.S. officials, under the auspices of the Organization of American States, engineered the creation of a "transitional council" to appoint a new prime minister and government officials who will be acceptable to Washington and Paris. The opposition demanded the replacement of the provisional prime minister, Yvon Neptune, formerly a close Aristide ally.

The rightists, led by former military and police officials, launched an armed revolt in early February against the Aristide government, whose popular support had dwindled in face of a grinding economic crisis, the austerity measures the regime imposed at the behest of imperialist finance capital, the regime's increased corruption, and its distancing from the masses of the Haitian people.

As the rightist forces advanced and the government—which had dissolved the army in 1995 at the demand of the imperialist powers—failed to put up an effective defense, Washington and Paris stepped up pressure on Aristide to resign. On February 29 he signed his resignation letter and was whisked off into exile on a U.S.-chartered plane. The rebels swept into the capital, taking over the national police headquarters, as U.S. Marines, along with French and Canadian troops entered Haiti—the third

U.S. military intervention in that country in the last century.

An initial U.S.-led force of 2,500 troops, which also includes 800 French, 60 Canadian, and 120 Chilean soldiers, has already been deployed in Haiti. It is commanded by U.S. Marine Col. Mark Gurganus. The imperialist force, organized under the aegis of the United Nations Security Council, is to

expand to around 5,000 troops and will be headed by a UN commander. U.S. Marines and French troops have secured key sites in the capital such as the presidential palace and the port. Teams of U.S. Special Forces and their French counterparts have been sent to cities outside Port-au-Prince.

Five days after Aristide's resignation,

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## 'Militant' launches campaign to double number of new subscribers

Fund drive will help expand circulation of socialist press

BY PATRICK O'NEILL  
 AND MARTÍN KOPPEL

Responding to increased interest in the socialist press among working people and youth, the *Militant* has launched an eight-week international campaign to double the number of new readers.

The drive, which runs from March 15 to May 10, aims to win 2,000 *Militant* subscribers—more than twice the total gained in the circulation campaign last fall. The goal for *Perspectiva Mundial* is 500 subscribers, a 25 percent increase over last time.

The subscription campaign will be carried out concurrently as a twin campaign with a drive to raise \$85,000 for the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*. The fund will help cover the costs of expanding the circulation of the two socialist periodicals.

Supporters of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* are mapping out plans to campaign for new readers on the job, at weekly plant-gate sales, in working-class districts through literature tables and door-to-door teams, among fellow workers involved in union struggles, on university campuses, and at a wide range of political activities.

A growing number of workers and farmers have found that they need the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*. They value them for telling the truth about the class struggle worldwide, providing a clear, working-class explanation of political developments, and championing the struggles of working people and the oppressed.

Most of the *Militant's* coverage is written by worker-correspondents in factories, on picket lines, at demonstrations, and other political arenas. They offer facts

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# Meat packer dies, casualty of profit drive

BY EDWIN FRUIT

DES MOINES, Iowa—Raúl Pérez-Rojas, 36, died while working on a sanitation crew in a meatpacking plant here on Sunday, February 15. He fell into a grinding machine that was turned on. According to the Polk County medical examiner, the cause of death was blood loss due to traumatic amputation of the legs.

The plant is a cut-and-kill hog operation now called Pine Ridge Farms, Inc., which

## AS I SEE IT

was bought in January from Iowa Packing Company.

I work at the Tyson plant in Perry, Iowa, which is also a cut-and-kill hog operation. A couple of days after the tragedy, the bosses put up in the cafeteria a blow-up poster of the article in the *Des Moines Register* on the worker's death. Above the article, the bosses editorialized that they sympathized with the worker's family and that this showed how important it is for every worker to work safely.

At a line meeting later in the week, the main floor supervisor went through graphic details of the fatal incident. He lectured workers that no one should take unsafe "shortcuts" and blamed the worker in Des Moines, saying he had taken a shortcut that had cost him his life.

While bosses always tell workers to report unsafe conditions, their emphasis is that safety depends on the individual worker. The employers let themselves off the hook.

Last month, supervisors made workers sign a statement that we are individually responsible for job safety. Our union, the United Food and Commercial Workers, moved to get these statements taken out of our files. According to union officials, our contract has a clause stating that the company is responsible for safety on the job. If that were not the case the company could absolve itself from taking care of on-the-job injuries. Having a union does not guarantee better conditions, but it does provide a vehicle for workers to use our collective strength.

Federal statistics show that more injuries occur in the meatpacking industry than any other U.S. industry. Almost one in 10 packinghouse workers suffers a cumulative

trauma injury each year. The Iowa Workforce Development Division of Labor reported that the rate of illness and injury in private companies for 1998 was 9.3 cases per 100 full-time workers. The highest rate, 58.2 per 100 workers, was in meatpacking plants.

There is nothing inherent about this industry, however, that makes it so dangerous. The bosses put workers in the plant on company-organized safety and ergonomics committees, but these committees are a fraud—the bottom line is always production and profit.

Workers labor in close quarters and line speeds are so fast that one can barely do a proper job on each piece of meat. Where I work we get one 15-minute break in the morning, of which five or six minutes are needed to take off and put back on equipment. After lunch we work three or more hours without a break.

Some old-timers report that the union used to have more control of line speed and would deal with problems on the line more quickly. Now if there is a problem, workers have to file a grievance that sometimes takes weeks to settle. Unless the union goes to arbitration, the plant manager is the last resort in settling a grievance.

There is no union at the Pine Ridge Farms plant. We don't know what pressures Pérez-Rojas was under from the bosses to do his job.

Two and a half years ago, however, a number of workers walked off the job at Iowa Packing, protesting job conditions as well as a supervisor's verbal abuse and



Workers process beef at close quarters in Kansas meat plant, January 2004. Meatpacking continues to record the highest injury rate among industries in the United States, as bosses crank up line speed, cut back on breaks, and cut corners on safety in their drive for profit.

favoritism. The workers were summarily fired. They went to court and a settlement was recently reached under which several got their jobs back with a percentage of back pay. In addition, the administrative law judge in the case ordered the company to post a notice informing workers of their right to organize a union, address their working conditions, and that a company rule that automatically fires them if they go on strike or walk out to address working conditions has been terminated.

The majority of workers at Pine Ridge are immigrants from nations in Latin America, Asia, Africa, Bosnia, and other countries. In the last few years, immigrant workers have been among those taking the lead in resisting the brutal conditions that

exist in plants and other industrial workplaces. We have seen this in the successful union organizing drive at Dakota Premium Foods in St. Paul, Minnesota, at meatpacking and poultry plants in Nebraska, in garment shops in Florida, and today at the Co-Op coal mine in Utah.

By fighting, these workers and the ones at Pine Ridge were able to make some gains and push the bosses back a little. Resisting these kinds of conditions and organizing is the only way to help stem the job conditions that led to the death of one of our fellow workers.

*Edwin Fruit is a member of UFCW Local 1149 at the Tyson plant in Perry, Iowa.*

## Houston students protest army spying at campus

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

HOUSTON—Speaking to the media at the University of Texas in Austin February 13, law student Sahar Aziz protested a recent incident of spying on campus by

agents of the U.S. Army. She spoke on behalf of organizers of a February 4 academic gathering titled, "Islam and the Law: The Question of Sexism?" which plainclothes military personnel had attended.

Less than a week after that event, two Army agents came to campus to ask the organizers for a video of the proceedings, and a list of those who had taken part in it. Aziz told the press conference that organizers refused to hand over to the Army the information demanded by the agents. "We believe that it is inappropriate for us to invite the public and the student body to come and freely exchange ideas and then to turn around and relay their personal information to the intelligence community," she said.

The two agents who arrived on campus February 9 to knock on doors for more information claimed they were following up on reports by the two agents, Army lawyers, who had attended the "Islam and the Law" event. The agents said they wanted the details about the participants because

the lawyers had stated that they'd been approached by "suspicious" Middle Eastern men, said Aziz.

"Why would three Middle Eastern men come up to these men and ask what's up with the military?" stated Maunica Sthan-ki, student vice president of the National Lawyers Guild. "That's absurd." The guild was one of the organizations that sponsored the academic conference—others included the university's law school, the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, the *Texas Journal of Women and the Law*, and the Muslim Law Students Association.

Jim Harrington of the Texas Civil Rights Project said at the press conference that the agents' tactics were calculated to "intimidate and scare people from using the First Amendment."

He added, "We're going to make the Army back off—and all the other intelligence operations—in the name of the First Amendment, or we're going to see them in court."

## THE MILITANT

### Imperialist troops out of Haiti

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U.S. Marine at Port-au-Prince airport, March 1.

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# Haiti: U.S. rulers patching together regime

**Continued from front page**

U.S. officials arranged for the establishment of a “Council of Wise Men” to pick a new prime minister and government. The council is made up of four supporters of the “civilian” opposition, one Aristide supporter, and one representative each of the Catholic and Episcopal church hierarchies.

Among the top candidates for prime minister is Smarck Michel, a businessman who held the post in 1994-95 but who broke with Aristide when the government hesitated in stepping up the pace of carrying out austerity programs and the selloff of state-owned companies. Another prospect is Lt. Gen. Herard Abraham, who in 1990 replaced Gen. Prosper Avril in the military regime and then handed power over to civilian leaders, a process that culminated in the election of Aristide. The main leaders of the armed revolt are Guy Philippe, who was assistant police chief for northern Haiti under Aristide until he was charged with attempting a coup, and Louis-Jodel Chamblain, a leader of the notorious death squad FRAPH.

As the rightist troops entered the capital after Aristide was flown out of the country, Philippe announced, “I am the chief” and called for reconstituting the Haitian army. The army had been dissolved by the Aristide government in 1995.



**U.S. Marines with Haitian police patrol streets of Port-au-Prince March 4.**

U.S. officials have called on the rightists to give up their weapons. Despite a pledge by Philippe to disarm, these forces have so far refused to do so. They have stopped patrolling the streets of the capital, however.

Washington does not want to be too closely identified with the Philippe and

Chamblain forces. Instead, the U.S. rulers are hoping to rapidly pull together a government of the “civilian” opposition and some Aristide supporters to stabilize the country.

Gen. James Hill, head of the U.S. Southern Command, ruled out reconstituting the Haitian army at a press conference at Haiti’s

international airport. “There is no need for a Haitian army,” he said. “I was here when President Aristide disbanded it, and that was the correct thing to do at the time.”

Instead, Washington hopes to pull the police forces back together. One of its first measures was to beef up the Haitian Coast Guard. U.S. officials announced they will pay the salaries of 500 Coast Guard officers for the next three months. They want the Coast Guard to aid U.S. forces in intercepting any Haitians who attempt to leave the island.

## **How Aristide government lost support**

Aristide became a popular figure in the early 1980s for his outspoken criticism of the dictatorship of Jean-Claude “Baby Doc” Duvalier. In 1986 a popular rebellion toppled the U.S.-backed Duvalier regime. Elections were held in 1990 and his Lavalas party, a bourgeois nationalist organization, won by a landslide.

Just seven months after taking office, Aristide was overthrown in a right-wing military coup. In 1994 he was returned to office by a U.S. invasion of the country. Even more dependent on Washington, the government willingly carried out imperialist-backed economic measures such as the lowering of tariffs on U.S. goods, hoping to curry favor with the U.S. rulers. But Washington never fully trusted Aristide’s ability to keep a lid on struggles by working people, many of whom initially hoped he would back their aspirations for relief from exploitation.

But the Aristide administration was increasingly tarnished by the worsening economic crisis—whose effects were magnified by the government’s pro-imperialist economic policies—and by its use of thugish methods to combat his opponents.

Washington increasingly distanced itself from the regime as it became less reliable as a source of stability. Under the pretext that the 2000 elections were “flawed,” the U.S. government began cutting off economic aid to Port-au-Prince.

Since Aristide’s ouster, the main complaint by liberal critics of the White House, such as U.S. Rep. Maxine Waters, former chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, has been that the Bush administration did not send an invasion force sooner, before the Haitian president’s resignation. Aristide himself had appealed for U.S. military intervention to save his government from the advance of the rightist forces.

Now in exile in the Central African Republic, Aristide has bitterly declared that he was kidnapped by U.S. Marines and forced to leave Haiti.

Luis Moreno, deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Port-au-Prince, said he showed up at Aristide’s home at about 4:00 a.m. on February 29 to escort him to the airport. Aristide had already packed his bags. “He knew why I was there,” Moreno said. At the airport, said Moreno, he asked for the letter of resignation and Aristide handed it to him.

Initially, after the rightist forces marched triumphantly into Port-au-Prince, supporters of Aristide largely stayed off the streets. In subsequent days they have held protests.

On March 5 several thousand Aristide supporters demonstrated outside the National Palace carrying his picture. They expressed their anger at the U.S. government and shouted at the U.S. Marine guards slogans such as “Come back with Aristide.”

# Venezuela: pro-imperialist recall drive falters

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suited for tactical combat, along the nearly 1,400-mile-long border with Venezuela.

The ELN press release also stated that Colombia’s army chief, Gen. Martin Orlando Carreño, announced in early March that the military was about to deploy another 30,000 soldiers to the Catatumbo forest area, which borders northwestern Venezuela at the oil-rich Zulia state, where a large U.S. military base is being built at a cost of \$300 million.

In a 3-2 vote, the National Electoral Council of Venezuela ruled that only 1.8 million of the 3.4 million signatures the opposition coalition had submitted December 19 on a recall referendum petition were valid. This is far below the 2.4 million required by the constitution to trigger a recall vote. The board disqualified 140,000 signatures outright. It also announced that another 1 million signatures need to be reconfirmed because of petition irregularities. This is to be done by each signer showing up and personally verifying his or her signature at one of 2,700 polling stations around the country between March 18 and 22.

On March 7, the CNE turned over to Coordinadora Democrática leaders part of its database with the evidence that formed the basis of its decision.

## **Caracas points to U.S. intervention**

Chávez said in a meeting two days earlier with foreign ambassadors in Caracas that hundreds of thousands of those who supposedly signed petitions do not exist. He displayed copies of petition forms bearing the names of people living abroad who do not appear in the country’s voter rolls, minors, and people who died long ago. He called the opposition “a terrorist and coup-mongering movement dressed in democratic clothes, which is trying to unseat the government.”

The Venezuelan president also accused Washington of instigating the campaign to topple his government. “We have enough proof that Mr. Bush continues to finance terrorist and putschist groups in Venezuela,” Chávez told the foreign diplomats. He demanded that Washington “get its hands off Venezuela.”

During his weekly Sunday TV show on March 7, Chávez threatened that Caracas would freeze oil shipments to the United States if the U.S. government took military action against Venezuela.

The world’s fifth-largest oil producer, Venezuela exports 1.5 million barrels of oil per day to the United States—its fourth-largest supplier.

Organization of American States officials and representatives of the U.S.-based Carter Center have stated their disagreement with the CNE decision to disqualify such a large number of signatures.

Opposition figures appeared to despair at the CNE ruling. Verifying the signatures of

1 million people person-by-person would be “physically impossible,” said Maria Corina Machado, a spokesperson for Sumate, “especially if we have to defend each and every one of these signatures. The way the government has it now, none of the challenged signatures are valid unless a person shows up and says, ‘Yes, that’s my signature.’” Sumate is a group that spearheaded the anti-Chávez petition campaign with the help of tens of thousands of dollars from the U.S.-based National Endowment for Democracy.

The opposition coalition has lobbied for a system in which disputed signatures can only be removed by the person whose signature appears on the petition. Electoral authorities, however, have said the reconfirmation process must take place by the rules they announced or the recall referendum request would be declared null and void.

Having missed the requirement for a referendum apparently by as many as 600,000 signatures, the pro-imperialist opposition has lost the initiative and has divided.

After the March 6 opposition protest in downtown Caracas, a number of Coordinadora Democrática leaders said they want to continue staging protests to press for a recall vote. Others, however, called for rejecting the validation process altogether and taking to the streets to confront the Chávez government directly.

## **Stake in the unfolding showdown**

Chávez was elected president in 1998 with huge popular support against the traditional capitalist parties, which now dominate the opposition coalition along with the country’s main business association, Fedecámaras. He was re-elected by a similar margin in 2000. A former paratrooper in the National Guard, Chávez achieved prominence through a failed 1992 military coup, which he presented as a response by “progressive” military officers to the repercussions of a 1989 working-class rebellion known as the *Caracazo*.

In that revolt, working people broke into supermarkets to take food and poured into the streets, marching toward wealthy neighborhoods to protest steep price hikes, skyrocketing unemployment, and rapidly deteriorating living and working conditions. President Carlos Andrés Pérez of Democratic Action, a social democratic party, sent the military to crush the Caracazo. It is estimated that the army killed more than 3,000 people in Caracas alone.

After the failure of the 1992 coup, popular discontent spread as the Democratic Action regime unleashed fierce repression.

Chávez is the head of a Bonapartist regime—a government whose central figure presents himself as a “strong man” standing above the traditional political institutions and balancing class interests between the country’s impoverished majority and the wealthy classes.

For example, the government has used

the National Guard for popular programs such as the distribution of food in workers districts at prices half of those in the regular markets. At the same time, it has also used the same troops on occasion to evict peasants from land they have taken over in disputes with capitalist landlords.

Chávez’s party, the Fifth Republic Movement (MVR), is a multi-class formation. While he often appeals to working people and small businessmen to rally behind his government’s policies, he also draws support from some middle-class layers and a minority section of the capitalist class.

The bourgeois nationalist government has left the country’s capitalist social relations virtually intact. The capitalist class in Venezuela, one of Latin America’s most industrialized and wealthiest countries, continues to hold state power, and is using its economic power to try to cripple the government.

The Chávez administration has drawn the wrath of the decisive layers of the domestic capitalists and landlords, as well as Washington, because of policies—including a land reform and other measures adopted in the fall of 2001—that if implemented would cut into the prerogatives of local and foreign finance capital. Diplomatic and trade ties with revolutionary Cuba established by Caracas since 1998 have also fueled the developing class confrontation.

The U.S. government has placed the Chávez regime in its cross hairs because of large mobilizations by working people the last two years—from the takeover of millions of acres by landless peasants, to the popular outpouring that derailed an April 2002 military coup and a bosses’ “strike” a year ago. Through these struggles Venezuela’s workers and peasants have gained self-confidence and heightened expectations. They are the main obstacles to the current pro-imperialist drive to unseat the president through a referendum.

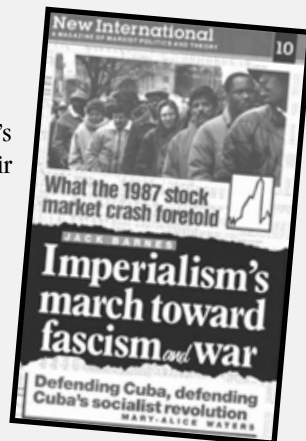
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# Socialist Workers Party inaugurates new int'l headquarters in NY Garment District

BY MICHAEL ITALIE  
AND SAM MANUEL

NEW YORK—Some 360 people gathered here February 29 for a meeting to celebrate the Grand Opening of the new headquarters that houses the New York Pathfinder Books and Militant Labor Forum, the newsroom of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, and the national office of the Socialist Workers Party. The newly completed facilities are located in the heart of Manhattan's Garment District.

The meeting featured presentations on key political questions facing workers and farmers today.

The new headquarters is the culmination of a several-year effort. For more than three decades the six-story Pathfinder Building on Manhattan's Lower West Side housed the Socialist Workers Party national office, the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, the Pathfinder editorial offices, and a printshop that produced Pathfinder's books and pamphlets. In 2000 the New York Pathfinder bookstore and Militant Labor Forum were established in the Garment District. In May of last year, the *Militant* and the Socialist Workers Party national offices moved to a temporary location near the local Pathfinder bookstore. The new headquarters integrates these facilities and is better suited to the political needs and the size of the communist movement, enabling it to respond effectively to the opportunities in the class struggle today.

The headquarters is located in the heart of New York's main industry, where tens of thousands of clothing workers are concentrated and where the garment workers union UNITE has its international headquarters. Garment shops occupy several floors of the building, and workers in neighboring buildings can be seen through the windows, often working well into the evenings or on weekends.

"We anticipate that fellow workers in this area will be among the best customers looking to buy Pathfinder books and seeking political discussions," said Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, who chaired the February 29 event.

To respond to that opportunity, Barnes reported, the staff of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* has decided to schedule



Militant photos by Elizabeth Olsen  
**Above, some 360 people attended February 29 meeting to celebrate Grand Opening of international headquarters in New York. Inset: SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes chaired meeting.**

their lunch breaks in order to staff the bookstore from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Chris Hoeppner, who headed up the organization of the work to build the new international headquarters, told the audience that 123 volunteers from 22 cities in the United States and four other countries came in to help over the 58-day construction effort. He explained that the volunteers, who included workers with skills in carpentry, plumbing, electrical wiring, and painting, saved the project half a million dollars in construction costs. Shelves, counter tops, and cabinets throughout the offices were custom-built by the volunteers.

"Many of these workers put in double stints," Hoeppner said, "finding a way to get time off from their jobs, and ensuring at critical points that we kept on schedule." A core of a dozen volunteers worked through the entire project.

Two or three times, Hoeppner said, crew organizers got much needed help from electricians, plumbers, and carpent-



ters, working for stints of a week or more. They also helped train many other less skilled volunteers who had come in for longer periods. Together they transformed an empty shell into an attractive workers political center, Hoeppner said.

The last week of the effort, he noted, the crew were boosted by volunteers from New Zealand, Sweden, Canada, and the United Kingdom, and others just back from the Havana book fair.

Finishing the project on schedule took detailed planning and organization, from the floor plan to the budget. Barnes reported that the work was completed on time and that the \$225,000 Headquarters Appeal surpassed its goal, raising more than \$231,000 to cover the project's costs. By the time of the meeting, the committee that oversaw the budget and expenditures had audited and closed its books.

Mary-Alice Waters, editor of the Marxist magazine *New International* and president of Pathfinder Press, reported from an international team of communist workers and youth who staffed the Pathfinder booth at the 13th Havana International Book Fair. The main political highlight of their work, she said, was the response they met to the successful fight last year to prevent the U.S. government from deporting *Militant* staff writer and *Perspectiva Mundial* editor Róger Calero.

In December 2002 the U.S. immigration cops had arrested Calero on his return from a reporting assignment in Cuba and Mexico. An international campaign was immediately launched to protest the attempt to deport him. Calero won a wide hearing within the U.S. labor movement, among supporters of the rights of immigrants, and among others fighting for justice. In the face of this growing campaign, the case became a political liability for U.S. authorities. The federal government dropped its deportation effort in May 2003.

Calero, who was in Havana to report on a January conference opposing the Free Trade Area of the Americas and on

the Havana book fair, was interviewed by the Cuban newspapers *Juventud Rebelde* and *Granma Internacional*. (See *Juventud Rebelde* interview on page 6.) He also appeared on the popular evening television news program *Lente Mundial* (World Lens), and spoke at meetings organized by the Federation of University Students and the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution.

"The interest in Róger's fight showed the desire in Cuba to learn about the class struggle in the United States," Waters said. Students at some of the meetings said, "This is information about the United States we don't often hear."

## Battle of ideas

Waters also spoke about the place of what is known in Cuba as the Battle of Ideas. This is a political offensive aimed at deepening the involvement of working people and youth in the revolution, central to which is broadening the educational and cultural opportunities available to the Cuban people. The goal is to counter the imperialist ideological drive promoting capitalism as the future, and in addition, to address the social inequalities that have widened as Cuba has become more directly exposed to the capitalist world market since the collapse of preferential trade relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in the early 1990s.

The social differentiation between Cubans with and without access to hard currency was evident at the Havana book fair, Waters said. The increased numbers of Cubans who came to the fair with dollars to purchase books, compared to previous years, stood in contrast with those who were limited to buying books in pesos.

One component of the Battle of Ideas, Waters said, is the campaign to repair and expand primary schools throughout the country to help reduce the teacher-pupil ratio. *Militant* reporters visited an elementary school in western Havana, she reported. Employees at the nearby offices of the State Strategic Reserves Institute (INRE) had taken responsibility two years before to help not only in repairing the school but in expanding the number of classrooms and facilities through volunteer work brigades.



Militant/Paul Pederson  
**Many of those attending February 29 event took advantage of organized tours of the new headquarters. Above: Militant editor Argiris Malapanis (right, front) shows visitors around Militant and Perspectiva Mundial newsroom.**

"They got volunteers from all over the country, sending out the word to INRE employees to find out who had skills in plumbing, electrical work, and carpentry," Waters said. "Workers would come in after work and on weekends to pitch in on the project." Some of the best-known artists in Cuba contributed murals. "They asked for four murals but 10 artists volunteered, so they had to do 10 murals," she added.

Waters pointed to the flashpoint in Venezuela, where the U.S. rulers, concerned about the growing struggles of working people in that country, are determined to overthrow the elected government and deal a blow to workers and farmers.

She noted that the number of Cubans involved in the medical and literacy mission in Venezuela make it Cuba's most extensive internationalist mission since the aid given to Angola to defeat the South African

Continued on Page 10

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# Hotel strikers in Montreal: ‘We’re all in the same boat’

BY CHRISTIAN CORNEJO

MONTREAL—“It’s here on the picket line that we can learn what solidarity means,” said Edith Bouchard, a housekeeping worker on strike against the Marriott Château Champlain hotel in downtown Montreal.

Bouchard is among 300 members of the Workers Union of Marriott Château Champlain, which is affiliated to the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN), who have been on strike here since February 17.

More than 95 percent of the hotel workers voted to go on strike the day after the company locked them out. They had been working without a contract since June 30, 2003.

“The company never liked our decision to join the CSN three months ago,” said picket Karim Nohra, a member of the local executive and of the grievance committee.

The hotel workers had previously been members of the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW). They decided to change their union affiliation in order to help strengthen their bargaining power vis-à-vis Marriott Château Champlain. According to Nohra, some 80 percent of unionized hotel workers in Montreal are affiliated to the CSN.

The different union locals don’t have a common bargaining committee, but their union officials meet before the end of their contracts, which expire at the same time, and set a standard contract proposal presented by all the union locals to the bosses.

He said Marriott Château Champlain opposes the two-year contract proposed by the union, which would mean that the new contract would expire in June 2005, at the same time as the other hotels in Montreal.

Strikers are also fighting for an improvement in wages, now ranging from Can\$10.82 to Can\$22 an hour.

The unionists are fighting to win a 4.5 percent wage increase in the first year and 5 percent in the second year of the contract, as well as a catch-up amount for certain categories of workers. Banquet team waiters, for example, earn less than their counterparts in other five-star hotels in Montreal.

The company is seeking to impose a number of concessions regarding job postings, holidays, and cuts in the number of vacation weeks from 5 to 4. The bosses also want to introduce irregular work schedules in order to respond to last-minute changes in workloads.

“These offers would affect our family life,” said Yanick Charbonneau, president of the Workers Union of Marriott Château Champlain, who was quoted on the CSN web site.

Hotel workers reported that four carloads of workers who have been on strike against Archivex here since September visited their picket line to support their struggle.

Strikers at Canadian National Railways (CN) have also joined the hotel workers’ picket line, which is only a few blocks away from the Gare Centrale, Montreal’s main train station, where some of the CN workers picket.

“This strengthens our morale. After all, we are all in the same boat,” Nohra said.

*Christian Cornejo is a member of UNITE Local 2582 in Montreal. Yannick Duguay, a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 500, contributed to this article.*

## Coal miners in UK stage 24-hour strikes



Militant  
Members of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) in the United Kingdom picket March 8 at the Kellingley mine in north Yorkshire. This was the first in a series of 24-hour strikes by miners against plans by the company, UK Coal, to impose a “flexible” schedule, including 12-hour night shifts and weekend work. Kellingley mine employs 400 workers. The union has threatened a full-scale strike if the company refuses to back down from its plans.

# Utah miners reject bosses’ ploy

Continued from front page  
mine property.

The miners enlisted the help of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), and since October they have set up pickets at the mine entrance. They are demanding union recognition and reinstatement to their jobs with full back pay.

Strikers report that they started receiving the company letter in early March. Many were hand-delivered by three bosses.

The letter asserts that the boss-organized “union,” the International Association of United Workers Union, is “the exclusive bargaining representative for workers” at the mine. Many miners report that until they started organizing they hadn’t even heard of any such outfit, had never been told by its officers of any grievance procedure, and had not received copies of any

bargaining agreement.

“Accepting this letter means agreeing [with the company’s claim] that we weren’t fired and that we accept their company-run union,” said a striker. “This is the same offer that we all rejected before.”

“This is a sign of weakness by the company. They are showing that they need us,” said Alyson Kennedy, another miner.

In the past two weeks the strikers have stepped up their picketing. They have set up rotating shifts outside the trailer that they have used to stay warm while on picket duty during the winter months.

“We are confronting the few scabs at six in the morning and six at night with more picketing,” said Gonzalo Salazar. “We stopped one guy from scabbing after he had already applied for work at the mine the day before.

“After we explained to him why we are on strike, he said he understood and even picketed with us for a while.”

On February 3, three officers of Local 953

of the International Union of Operating Engineers in Kirtland, New Mexico, delivered a check for \$750 to miners at the picket trailer. The local represents more than 400 miners, most of them Navajo, in New Mexico.

The Local 953 members recently ended a 12-day strike against BHP Billiton in which they won a four-year contract with wage increases.

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# Hearing set for Palestinian jailed by immigration cops

BY RÓGER CALERO

NEW YORK—A March 30 court hearing has been set for Palestinian activist Farouk Abdel-Muhti, who has been jailed for more than a year and a half under the threat of deportation. According to a March 8 press statement by his New York-based defense committee, U.S. District Judge Yvette Kane of the Middle District of Pennsylvania ordered the hearing in response to Abdel-Muhti’s habeas corpus petition, first filed in New Jersey 16 months ago.

“After nearly two years in immigration detention, Palestinian-American activist Farouk Abdel-Muhti is finally getting a chance to present his case in court,” said the Committee for the Release of Farouk

Abdel-Muhti. The statement reported that Kane scheduled the hearing for the federal court in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

A well-known advocate of Palestinian self-determination and defender of Cuba’s socialist revolution, Abdel-Muhti—who has lived in the United States since the 1970s—was arrested in New York on April 26, 2002. No charges were filed against him.

The immigration police have kept Abdel-Muhti locked up since his arrest while they seek his deportation. The Palestinian revolutionary has been shuttled among several prisons in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, as the authorities try without success to isolate him and break his spirit.

Abdel-Muhti first filed his habeas petition in November 2002, after he had been detained for more than six months. A U.S. Supreme Court ruling has mandated the release of immigration detainees jailed for that period, when their deportation orders cannot be carried out within a “reasonable period of time.”

The defense committee urges defenders of democratic rights to attend the March 30 hearing, and to continue to press the government to drop its deportation proceedings. Supporters of Abdel-Muhti’s defense campaign will be organizing transportation from the New York area. The defense committee can be contacted at 212-674-9499. Further information can be found at [www.freefarouk.org](http://www.freefarouk.org).

Continued from front page

and explain key political questions not as outside commentators and critics, but as participants in the working-class resistance to the ruling-class offensive: from the union battles by coal miners in the western United States to those of rail workers in Canada, to protests by dairy farmers in Scotland and England to defend their livelihood.

The socialist publications present developments in world politics from the standpoint of the interests of working people as an international class—from the spreading economic depression conditions today, to the growing use of military might by Washington and other competing imperialist powers in the Mideast, South America, and elsewhere. They are an irreplaceable tool for building a movement that can lead working people to take power out of the hands of the capitalist minority.

The *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* are financed exclusively through the contributions of workers, farmers, and others who recognize their irreplaceable role. The \$85,000 spring fund is needed to help cover the costs of producing these two publications, from rent and utilities to shipping costs, as well as to help finance special reporting teams—like those on the scene right now in Venezuela and Palestine—and to boost their circulation.

To be able to take full advantage of these

increased opportunities to expand the readership of the socialist press, the special offer for a 12-week introductory subscription has been cut from \$10 to \$5. A trial subscription to *Perspectiva Mundial* has been reduced from \$6 to \$5. *Militant* supporters in Australia, Canada, Iceland, New Zealand, Sweden, and the United Kingdom have announced comparable rate reductions (see page 2 subscription ad and business information box for listings of the new subscription prices in around the world).

Also, starting with this issue, a single copy of the *Militant* will cost \$1.00 in the United States, a price cut of 50 cents. Cover prices will also be reduced by a third or more in other countries where the socialist newsweekly is sold. (See top of front page.) The price of *Perspectiva Mundial* will be lowered from \$2.50 to \$2.00, beginning with the April issue. The \$85,000 fund-raising campaign will also help cover the subscription rate reductions. The new introductory *Militant* subscription price, for example, is slightly below the \$5.16 cost of printing and mailing the paper for 12 weeks.

The focus of the sales campaign will be on first-time readers, but renewal subscriptions are also encouraged and will be counted toward the goals, as part of the ongoing effort to expand the longtime subscription base.

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# Róger Calero talks with Cuban readers on U.S. class struggle

Printed below is an interview with Róger Calero that appeared in the February 15 issue of the Cuban daily *Juventud Rebelde*, the newspaper of the Union of Young Communists of Cuba. The article appeared under the headline “The only way to win: mobilizing ourselves.” The translation is by the *Militant*.

BY LUIS LUQUE ALVAREZ

In the United States, to be an immigrant—especially from the nations of the South—entails risks. With astonishing ease, even if a person has a residency permit, a legal Hispanic resident who travels abroad can, on his return, find himself facing a threat of deportation and being jailed for the sake of the superpower’s national security.

Such a thing happened to Róger Calero, a young man originally from Nicaragua who has lived in the United States since 1985. An associate editor of *Perspectiva Mundial* and staff writer for the *Militant* newswweekly, Calero was arrested in the Houston, Texas, airport on December 3, 2002, as he was returning from a meeting against the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) in Havana, and an event by the Continental Organization of Latin American and Caribbean Students (OCLAE) in Mexico.

“On my return,” he told *Juventud Rebelde*, “the Immigration Service arrested me and said they would not allow my entry into the country on account of a minor criminal offense in 1988 when I was in high school and for which I received a \$50 fine. When I filed for permanent residency in 1989, I informed them of the incident and was pardoned. They granted me residency, and renewed it 10 years later.

“When I returned from Cuba and Mexico in 2002, however, they told me the rules had changed, and that under the 1996 law they had the power to deport me, even based on a criminal case prior to the law’s enactment. In 2002 alone, some 640,000 persons were deported for misdemeanors.”

*Question. What happened after your arrest?*

*Answer.* I contacted the editor of my magazine, and a call of protest was issued, demanding my release. Through the Socialist Workers Party and organizations that defend workers’ rights, a defense committee was organized to try to unite various forces independently, without relying on bourgeois institutions, knowing that the only way of winning was through

our independent mobilization.

The unions played a decisive role. Before working at *Perspectiva Mundial*, I had a job in a meatpacking plant, and there I was able to participate in creating a union and winning a contract. These compañeros immediately circulated a letter demanding my release. The union offered its hall for events, raised funds, and at the same time looked for support from other unions in the area.

Many people who realized there was going to be a public fight also began telling their own stories. This started with the very first articles I sent from prison to *Perspectiva Mundial*, which were published.

What’s happening today is that alongside an increase in attacks on immigrant workers, there’s a greater resistance by the working class, both immigrant and native born. We in the SWP have been following these signs. For this reason, much of the support came from the unions, which shows that a cause like this must be brought directly into the unions to be taken up.

*Q. When were you released?*

A. Ten days later. After dozens and dozens of letters arrived at the Immigration Service, they felt forced to release me, even though the law calls for mandatory detention of all those facing deportation. It was the first victory.

In fact, what happened to me happens to hundreds throughout the country every day.



Arrests at the border, factory raids. And the reaction to my defense case showed that it was seen as the same situation facing millions of workers in the United States. People not only supported me, but identified with my case. In face of this, the government was forced to withdraw the charges against me.

*Q. Tell us about your experiences in prison.*

A. First, I should say that when they arrested me, we were already receiving confirmation of the reality that many ordinary people who today work in a factory

6

internacional

JUVENTUD REBELDE

## La única forma de ganar: MOVILIZÁNDONOS

**Luis Luque Alvarez**

**E**n EE.UU., ser inmigrante —en especial de las naciones del Sur— conlleva riesgos. Con pasmosa facilidad, aun contando con permiso de residencia, un hispano que viaje al exterior, puede encontrarse a su regreso con una amenaza de deportación, y ser encarado en virtud de la seguridad nacional de la superpotencia.

Le sucedió a Róger Calero, un joven de procedencia nicaragüense que vive en Estados Unidos desde 1985. Subdirector de la revista *Perspectiva Mundial* y redactor del *Militant*, órgano del Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores de EE.UU., Calero fue detenido en el aeropuerto de Houston, Texas, el 3 de diciembre de 2002, al volver de un encuentro contra el Área de Libre Comercio de las Américas (ALCA) en La Habana, y de un evento de la Organización Latinoamericana y Caribeña de Estudiantes (OLCAE) en México.

“Al regresar —relata a JRA—, el Servicio de Inmigración me arresta e informa que me negarán la entrada al país debido a un antecedente penal menor, de 1988, cuando estaba en la escuela secundaria, y por el que recibí una multa de 50 dólares. Cuando solicité mi residencia permanente, en 1989, informé del incidente, y fui perdonado. Me fue otorgada y me la renovaron diez años después.

“Sin embargo, cuando regresé en 2002 de Cuba y México, me dijeron que las reglas habían cambiado, y que bajo la ley de 1996 tenían el poder de deportarme, aun con antecedentes penales menores a la promulgación de la ley. Solamente en el año 2002, aproximadamente 640 000 personas fueron deportadas por delitos menores.”

—¿Qué sucedió tras su detención?

—Me puse en contacto con el director de mi revista, y comencé un llamado a protestar, a exigir mi excarcelación. A través del PST y de organizaciones de personas de los derechos de los trabajadores, se organizó un comité de defensa, para tratar de unir diferentes fuerzas de forma independiente, sin contar con las instituciones burguesas, a sabidas de que la única forma de ganar era a través de nuestra movilización independiente.

“Los sindicatos desempeñaron un papel decisivo. Antes de trabajar en *Perspectiva Mundial*, laboré en una fábrica empaquetadora de carne, y allí pude participar en la creación del sindicato y en el establecimiento de un convenio laboral. Estos compañeros inmediatamente circularon una carta exigiendo mi excarcelación. El sindicato prestó su local para eventos, recaudó fondos, y a la vez buscó el apoyo de otros sindicatos en el área.

“También muchos que se dieron cuenta de que se iba a perder públicamente, empezaron a divulgar su propia historia, a partir de los relatos anteriores que yo enviaba desde la prisión a la revista, y que se estaban publicando.

“Suicidé que hoy se está produciendo, a la par que un aumento en los ataques contra los trabajadores inmigrantes, una mayor resistencia de la clase trabajadora de este origen y de la nacida en el país, y nosotros, desde el PST, hemos venido siguiendo estos movimientos. Así, mucho del apoyo vino de los sindicatos, lo que demuestra que cada vez más gente debe volverse a su favor, para que las reivindicaciones se hagan realidad.”

—¿Cuándo le liberaron?

—A los diez días. Tras docenas y docenas de cartas llegadas al Servicio de Inmigración, se vieron obligados a sacarme, aun cuando la ley establece la detención obligatoria para todo aquel que esté enfrentando la deportación. Fue una primera victoria.

“En realidad, lo que me sucedió a mí le sucede diariamente a cientos de personas en el país. Arrestos en la frontera, redadas en las fábricas. Y la reacción de la defensa de mi caso vino a mostrar que fue visto como la situación de millones de trabajadores en EE.UU. que no solo me resistieron, sino que se unieron identificados con mi causa. Frente a esto, el gobierno se vio obligado a retirar los cargos en mi contra.”

—¿Hablamos de sus experiencias en prisión.

—Primero me debo decir que cuando me arrestan, ya veníamos confirmando la realidad de muchas personas comunes y corrientes, que hoy están en una fábrica y mañana pueden enfrentar la deportación. Las autoridades dicen que están deportando criminales, peligros para la sociedad, sospechosos de terrorismo, pero se sabe que los más afectados son los trabajadores.

“Estaba en una cárcel privada, empleada por el Servicio

Róger Calero, nicaragüense de nacimiento residente en Estados Unidos, narra los avatares y las detenciones ilegales de miles de inmigrantes, atrapados en la psicosis del 11 de septiembre

Róger Calero, a la derecha, de pie, con compañeros de prisión en la cárcel del INS en Houston, Texas 2002.

extremadamente peligrosas y percibiendo salarios muy malos. Ellos han buscado el apoyo del sindicato minero y recibido un amplio respaldo. Ante la actitud de que somos víctimas, y debemos agitar de todo, se impone la visión de que tenemos derechos, de que vamos a luchar por ellos, y buscar aliados en otros trabajadores del país para luchar juntos.

“En este esfuerzo, muchas campañas pueden converger. En el caso de los cinco compañeros revolucionarios cubanos presos en EE.UU., a su tiempo divulgamos el confinamiento en solitario a que los sometieron, y realizamos actos públicos sobre ellos, así como los llamamos contra la brutalidad policial y por los derechos de la mujer, pues creo que en los que están en la lucha, vamos a encontrar a los más dispuestos a defender la causa de estos cinco cubanos —Gerardo, René, Ramón, Antonio y Fernando—, y a los que pueden entender la perspectiva revolucionaria de Cuba, que es la que ellos defienden.”

### No pueden salirse con la suya

Martin Koppel, director del *Militant* y de *Perspectiva Mundial*, está convencido de que en la campaña por la liberación de los Cinco Héroes cubanos el mejor aliado que ellos pueden tener es el pueblo trabajador de EE.UU.

“Son las personas que están luchando contra diversas formas de injusticia, las que se pueden identificar con la causa de los cinco luchadores. Este no es solo un ataque contra la Revolución, sino contra los derechos fundamentales de los trabajadores. Es importante saber además que los Cinco no son solo víctimas de una injusticia, sino luchadores cubanos, combatientes internacionales, las inclusiones, y es bueno conocerlos para entender por qué el gobierno de EE.UU. los toma como objetivos de su amenaza.”

tomorrow could be facing deportation. The authorities say they’re deporting criminals, threats to society, terrorism suspects, but people know that those most affected are workers.

I was in a private jail used by the Immigration Service to house detained immigrant workers awaiting expulsion from the U.S. There I was able to meet a young man from Nigeria who was a door-to-door salesman. One day he knocked on the door of a Houston cop, who accused him of trespassing, arrested him, and turned him over to the Immigration Service to be deported.

You can also meet permanent residents, who have lived in the United States for many years, where they have a home and even U.S.-born children, and for something that happened in their past they’re facing expulsion.

I also got to know the case of a group of Salvadorans who months earlier went on a hunger strike to pressure the court to hear their cases. Not to remain in the country any longer, but rather to at least go back to their native land, since they had been held longer than the legal limit.

Sometimes they offer you a piece of paper to sign to facilitate your legal proceedings. That is, your deportation could be worked out within 10 days if you could accept deportation and agree to sign voluntarily. They thus eliminate any possibility of fighting for your rights. Many workers sign in face of the threat of remaining in jail indefinitely.

To cite a figure, last year alone close to 1.7 million people were deported.

*Q. After you were released, what did you concentrate on?*

A. We began to organize public events in 23 cities across the country. We visited groups of strikers, garment workers in Miami. Even Univisión interviewed us on the program “Aquí y Ahora” [Here and now], because it was of interest to so many thousands in similar situations.

After the Department of Homeland Security presented a motion to close my case on May 1, 2003, we organized a tour not just to thank people for their support, but to exchange experiences and help advance the causes of other workers.

In this way we met many individuals

who felt that our victory strengthened their fight, the fact that someone was fighting deportations. But in addition, people were also seeking to organize a union and engaging in other forms of resistance.

We’re also supporting one of the most important causes in the country: that of 75 coal miners—the majority Mexican—in a small town in Utah, where they were working in extremely dangerous conditions and receiving very low wages. They have sought the support of the miners union and have received broad backing. Against the attitude that we are victims and have to put up with everything, the view is gaining ground that we have rights, that we’re going to fight for them and look for allies among other workers in the country, in order to fight together.

In this effort, many campaigns can converge. In the case of the five Cuban revolutionary compañeros imprisoned in the United States, at the time of their solitary confinement we got out the word and held public activities. We did the same with the fight against police brutality and for the rights of women. I believe that it’s among those in struggle that we’re going to find the people most willing to defend the case of the five Cubans—Gerardo, René, Ramón, Antonio, and Fernando—and those able to understand Cuba’s revolutionary perspective, which is what they defend.

## ‘Working people in United States are allies of Cuban 5’

The interview with Róger Calero was accompanied by the following sidebar quoting *Perspectiva Mundial* editor Martín Koppel, who joined Calero for the interview. This item appeared under the headline, “They can’t get away with it.”

Martin Koppel, editor of the *Militant* and of *Perspectiva Mundial*, is convinced that in the fight to free the five Cuban heroes the best ally they can have is the working people of the United States.

“They are the people who are fighting against different kinds of injustice, so they can identify with the cause of the five fighters,” Koppel says. “This is not only an attack against the revolution, but against fundamental workers’ rights. It’s important to see that the Five are not simply victims of an injustice, but Cuban internationalist fighters. This helps to explain why the U.S. government is targeting them for this attack.”



# 5,000 strike Canadian National Railway

BY PATRICIA O'BEIRNE

TORONTO, Ontario—Some 5,000 rail workers walked off the job at Canadian National Railway Co. locations across Canada at midnight February 19 to win improvements in pensions and stop company attacks on job security and working hours. The strikers, who make up almost one in four of the rail company's workforce, are members of the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW). They include locomotive maintenance workers, container yard workers, and clerical staff. Several days earlier, workers in CAW Local 100 had voted by a margin of 63 percent against a proposed agreement worked out between union officials and the Canadian National Railway (CN) bosses. The agreement included a 3 percent wage increase for each year of the three-year contract. Workers cite the demand for improved pensions as a key issue, partly because many are close to retirement. The union is also demanding wage increases, extended health and vision care, and an end to recently introduced disciplinary practices. The CAW has called on CN to increase the company's contribution to the formula for determining pensions. Such a raise would add about Can\$120 (Can\$1=US\$.75) to the monthly pension of a retired worker with 35 years' seniority. The union last forced the company to boost its contribution six years ago, from a level where it had been frozen for three decades. CN is Canada's largest rail company and the biggest hauler of timber products in North America, moving more than 4 million boxcars of freight annually. Its rail network stretches from Canada south to the Gulf of Mexico.

The bosses have used managers and some scabs to move freight. The union fact sheet Railfax said March 4 that "soon after the start of the strike, CN tried another tactic," making 400 owner-operator truck drivers "act like trains. CN has forced them to perform long-haul deliveries across thousands of miles, instead of the local and regional short hauls that they were hired to do. CN has also tried to bargain individual deals with these members for such long-haul trips." The CAW has gone to court to obtain an injunction against this practice. Bill

Mowat, a Local 100 shop steward, discussed the issues in dispute with *Militant* reporters. "CN wants to be able to bring in 10-12 hour shifts and assign days off as decided by the company," he said.

Mowat criticized the offer voted down before the strike. "The company offered no pension increase and only a 3 percent wage increase," he said. "There used to be a demerit system for discipline. Now, the company has imposed a new, harsher system. There is an automatic five-day suspension without pay as a minimum."

Louis Têtu, picket captain at the CN Montreal container yard, said, "The average age of the workforce is 50. The last real wave of hiring was in 1979. The company donates money to charity to look good, but instead they should give work boots to unemployed youth and put them to work. I've never had the chance to work side-by-side with a young worker."

Although CN officials deny that the strike is hurting their bottom line, the lack of rail freight transport is having an impact on some major customers. A March 4 Reuters

dispatch from Montreal reported that container traffic at CN had dropped 26 percent in the first week of the strike compared to the previous week. The company admits that its container traffic has been hit hard, but says that total traffic is down only 3 percent.

Union solidarity has provoked squeals by bosses in southern Ontario's auto industry, which is one of the world's largest.

"CN Rail strike hurts auto makers," read a headline in the February 26 *Toronto Star*. It reported Ford officials as saying that CAW members had "refused to unload parts from CN trains at its assembly plant in St. Thomas and other employees would not load finished products into rail cars at its engine operation in Windsor." Ford sent 1,200 St. Thomas workers home that afternoon. DaimlerChrysler has also reported disruption to vehicle deliveries.

The following day, workers again refused to handle parts from rail cars, which crippled output on one shift at two Ford assembly plants in Oakville and St. Thomas. The company sent 3,700 workers home early. In Oshtewa, where General Motors (GM) has an

assembly plant, GM has taken steps to use municipal property, including the airport, to store train-bound vehicles. Autoworkers at the GM plant in Windsor, members of CAW Local 200, have refused to accept or load CN Rail since the strike began. CAW officials said that they are working with the auto giants to find alternatives to CN. The rail company is "not operating as usual," said union president Buzz Hargrove. "We expect the auto companies to find alternative sources of transportation."

Workers told the *Militant* that they had received messages of solidarity, including from a Teamsters local. A United Transportation Union local in Alberta has called upon its members to make donations to the strike fund, they reported.

On March 8 CN representatives broke off contract talks with the union. "The terms of the agreement that we reached with CAW on January 23 remain on the table," said company spokesman Mark Hallman.

*Christian Cornejo and Yannick Duguay in Montreal contributed to this article.*

## In Havana, Youth Army of Labor soldiers campaign to prevent dengue disease outbreak

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

HAVANA—"The danger of dengue fever is over but our anti-mosquito campaign goes on," Orlando Calvo said. Calvo and Miguel Matos, who are both 18, are members of the Ejército Juvenil del Trabajo (EJT), the Youth Army of Labor, which is spearheading the work of holding the line in the ongoing battle with the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, carrier of the dengue disease. They spoke to the *Militant* during a visit to the Pathfinder stand at the Havana International Book Fair in early February.

The EJT is the name of special units of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba that in addition to their military training are assigned to agricultural work and other production. Since its founding in 1973, 345,000 young

recruits in EJT units and 100,000 associated civilian workers have carried out a variety of productive labors—from the cultivation of sugar, citrus fruits, coffee, root vegetables, and tobacco, to cattle rearing and reforestation. As military units, they have set an example of discipline and efficiency, striving to maximize the use of scarce resources. By bringing substantial quantities of produce into the cities on a regular basis, they have helped hold down the prices of basic foods sold in agricultural markets.

Over the past year, the EJT has also been part of the nationwide anti-dengue campaign. Dengue fever reappeared in Cuba a few years ago, a product of the epidemic in surrounding Caribbean countries, where economic conditions created by the deepening capitalist crisis worsen the sanitary conditions in which the mosquito thrives. Cuba also became more vulnerable to a disease that had been eradicated years before. Dengue is particularly dangerous because the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito breeds in cities, laying its eggs in water storage tanks especially. But the outbreak was defeated by a sustained popular mobilization from the end of 2001 to the beginning of 2003.

During that period, thousands of "special detachments," including students from the schools for revolutionary social workers, members of the Communist Party and Union of Young Communists, participants in voluntary construction contingents, municipal employees, and health-care workers combed neighborhoods, going house to house in a campaign to destroy eggs, fumigate the mosquitoes, and educate the population on how to eradicate breeding places and keep the mosquito at bay.

This campaign and the broad collaboration of the population in it was possible because of the social priorities established by Cuba's workers and farmers and their revolutionary government. It was backed up by discussions in factory and workplace assemblies, educational TV programs, and articles in the press. Only two people in Havana died from this debilitating disease. By contrast, the epidemic has continued to have a severe impact in Central and South America. According to the World Health Organization, there were 609,000 cases reported throughout the Americas in 2001—a tenfold increase since 1980. "We've taken



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

**Orlando Calvo (left) and Miguel Matos, members of Youth Army of Labor, show tools in campaign to prevent a recurrence of dengue disease, including chemicals and a chart for monitoring progress in fumigating, inspections, and education.**

## Pathfinder has busy stand at Havana International Book Fair



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

HAVANA—"How can they know about truth, those who speak ill of books?" "We don't tell people 'believe,' we say 'read!'"

Signs containing quotes like these from Cuban national hero José Martí and President Fidel Castro, respectively, were prominent at the Havana International Book Fair. They captured the spirit of this annual cultural festival, which took place February 6-15 this year.

The event featured book presentations, roundtable discussions, poetry readings, concerts, films, plays, and other cultural events. Cuban publishers subsequently traveled across the country with the book fair, reaching 33 additional cities and towns, ending March 7 in the island's second city, Santiago de Cuba. According to María Mederos, head of the organizing committee for the fair, 460,000 people attended this year's event in Havana, a 10 percent increase over last year. They bought a total of more than 1 million books. The photo on the bottom right shows visitors checking out new titles in the fair's central store, where most books sold for around 10 pesos each.

As in previous years, Pathfinder Press had a busy stand at the fair (left). Frank García, a student at Havana University, was one of those who returned to the stand—as he has done year after year—on the lookout for Pathfinder's new titles on revolutionary politics and for discussion with members of Pathfinder's international team of volunteers (top right, Arnar Sigurdsson from Iceland talks with interested visitors). Others, like carpenter Ramón Gutiérrez, discovered Pathfinder books for the first time. Dozens of Venezuelan youth currently studying at the nearby School of Social Work were among those who came by the Pathfinder booth.

—JONATHAN SILBERMAN



# How Socialist Workers Party was founded

Below is an excerpt from an article by James P. Cannon on the founding convention of the Socialist Workers Party. First published in the February 1938 issue of *New International*, the article appears in *The Founding of the Socialist Workers Party: Minutes and resolutions 1938–39*, one of Pathfinder's books of the month for March. The book carries documents from the convention, which was held in Chicago on New Year's weekend, 1938. Cannon was elected national secretary by the gathering. The article refers to the fusions and splits that had led up to the SWP's foundation. The party's roots lay in the fight by veteran communists against the Stalinist degeneration of the Communist International. Following their 1928 expulsion from the Communist Party they formed the Communist League of America, which became

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

the Workers Party through a fusion with the American Workers Party led by A.J. Muste. Leaders of the party were deeply involved in massive labor battles in the latter half of the 1930s. In 1936 the Workers Party dissolved and its members joined the Socialist Party in order to reach its growing left wing with their communist perspective.

One year later the new party held its founding convention. It reaffirmed the Marxist approach in the fight against the coming imperialist war, the spread of fascism across Europe, and attacks by the bosses at home. Together with other



Coal miners rally Oct. 10, 1937, outside Lehigh Navigational Coal in Coaldale, Pennsylvania, to support 39 “stay-down” strikers inside the mine. Socialist Workers Party cadres were trained through strikes and labor battles of the 1930s.

revolutionaries, including Leon Trotsky—a leader of the Russian Revolution and defender of its course against the Stalinist counterrevolution—the new party worked to form the Fourth International. Copyright © 1982 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.



### BY JAMES P. CANNON

All the experience of the class struggle on a world scale, and especially the experience of the past twenty years, teaches one lesson: the most important problem of the working class is the problem of the party. Success or failure in this domain spells the difference between victory or defeat every time. The struggle for the party, the unceasing effort to construct the new political organization of the vanguard on the ruins of the old one, concentrates within itself the most vital and progressive elements of the class struggle as a whole. From this point of view every concrete step in the direction of a reconstructed party has outstanding importance. The convention of the left-wing branches of the disintegrated Socialist Party at Chicago over the New Year's weekend, which resulted in the formal launching of a new organization—the Socialist Workers Party, section of the Fourth International<sup>1</sup>—thus claims first attention from the revolutionary

internationalists throughout the world. For them—and their judgment is better than any other because they foresee and prepare the future—it marks a new milestone on the historic road of workers' liberation.

The reconstruction of the revolutionary labor movement in the form of a political party is not a simple process. In the midst of unprecedented difficulties, complications, and contradictions, the work goes ahead, like all social movements, in zigzag fashion. The new movement takes shape through a series of splits and fusions, which must appear like a Chinese puzzle to the superficial observer. But how could it be otherwise? The frightful disintegration of the old movements, on a background of worldwide social upheaval, disoriented and scattered the revolutionary militants in all directions. They could not find their way together, and draw the same basic conclusions, in a day. The new movement is fraught with catastrophic reverses, forward leaps, and deadening periods of seeming stagnation. But for all that, it is a movement with an invincible historic motor force, and it moves along. The Chicago convention, which brought all the preceding work of the Fourth Internationalists in the U.S. to a fruitful culmination, is a forceful reminder of this fact.

The Chicago convention itself was a striking illustration of this contradictory

process of fusion and split—and a step forward. It crossed the last *t* and dotted the last *i* on the split of the moribund Socialist Party. At the same time, it recorded the complete fusion of the left-wing socialists with the former members of the Workers Party, just as the Workers Party earlier came into existence through a fusion of the Communist Left Opposition and revolutionary militants of independent origin. The invincible program of the Fourth International is the magnet which attracts to itself all the vital revolutionary elements from all camps. It is the basis, and the only basis, on which the dispersed militants can come together and forge the new movement.

This was demonstrated once again at the Chicago convention when the resolution for the Fourth International was carried without a single dissenting vote. The two currents—former Workers Party and “native” socialists, which were about equally represented—showed complete unity on this decisive question. The 76 regular and 36 fraternal delegates from 35 cities in 17 states, who constituted the convention, came to this unanimous decision after due consideration of the question and ample preconvention discussion. Although the great bulk of time and discussion at the convention were devoted to American affairs—and properly so—the great matters of principle embodied in the international question inspired and guided everything.

This significant victory of the Fourth International in America cannot be without far-reaching influence on the international arena. The brief period of struggle as a faction within the Socialist Party comes to a definite end, and the American section of the Fourth International takes the field again as an independent party, with forces more than doubled, without any losses or splits, and with a firmer unity than ever before. Principled politics in this case also have proved to be the best and most effective kind of practical politics.

<sup>1</sup>Strictly speaking, the SWP was not yet a section of the Fourth International since the latter organization was not founded until September 1938. Both Trotsky and the SWP leaders used this formulation even though technically the SWP was a section of the Movement for the Fourth International (MFI) between January and September.

March

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The Militant March 22, 2004



**This is an apology?**—“I should have chosen my words better.”—Secretary of Education Rod Page, who backed off an



**Harry Ring**

inch in his invidious smear of the National Education Association as “terrorist.”

**An ounce of prevention...**—University Place, Washington—A

beeping briefcase that caught the attention of the Pierce County sheriff’s bomb squad yielded only condoms. Authorities said a robot X-rayed the case found underneath a counter in University Way, a suburb of Tacoma. Police said the inside looked suspicious so they blew up the case, scattering condoms everywhere.”—*USA Today*.

**Simple, just hire bosses**—“Recruitment of production line workers in a computer assembly line plant in Guadalajara, Mexico, obeys a perverse logic. The city’s employment agencies, which employ most of the 100,000 workers in the plants, rather than the large computer companies themselves,

subject applicants to a day of tests designed to find the most imaginative and creative people, with the highest self-esteem. The catch is that these are the people who are rejected.”—*Financial Times*, London.

**‘Freedom,’ not free**—Four New Jersey banks banded together to offer Freedom Loans for National Guard members facing deployment to Iraq. Troops in need for mortgage payments, etc., can apply for loans with deferred payment. Including, we assume, Freedom interest rates.

**Harsh numbers**—*The Times of London* reports that nearly 2,000

workers a year exposed to asbestos die of lung destruction. Researchers say the number should peak in 2015.

**Backward march**—New Mexico teachers are grumbling about a new dress code, including “no blue jeans.” Our partner commented that when she went to school, women didn’t dream of wearing jeans to school. But, she underlined, that was 50 years ago.

**Big Apple recipe**—“New York—A Bronx neighborhood group is using bacon, peanut butter and cheese to lure 10,000 rats to their deaths. Fernando Matco, the group’s president, said residents

can’t walk on the sidewalks because there are so many rats.

**And lotsa popcorn**—Perched atop the Los Angeles Pacific Palisades, a stately mansion plus a private movie theater is on the market. With padded walls (?), a full size screen, and a dozen seats on two levels. Yours for \$12.4 million. A great venue for featuring reruns of the “Terminator” series.

**Spring house cleaning**—“Tackle the clutter, sift out clippings saved for this column and send them snail mail or e-mail” Pathfinder Books, 4229 S. Central Avenue, Los Angeles, CA. 90027. laswp@earthlink.net

## Pro-choice group resists gov’t order to turn over files

BY MARTY RESSLER

PITTSBURGH—Planned Parenthood of western Pennsylvania is one of six affiliates of this reproductive rights organization across the country that are resisting orders by the U.S. Justice Department to turn over confidential medical records.

The Planned Parenthood Federation of America Inc. and doctors groups filed suit last November in a U.S. District Court in San Francisco challenging the Partial-Birth Abortion Act. The act was passed by Congress in November and signed into law by President George Bush, but its implementation is on hold pending the legal challenge, which will be heard March 29.

The Justice Department insists that hundreds of records from Planned Parenthood offices in Pittsburgh, San Diego, Los Angeles, New York, Kansas/Mid-Missouri, and the Washington, D.C., area are necessary to bolster its defense of the anti-abortion rights law. Federal subpoenas were served on them February 24.

The chief executive officer of Planned Parenthood in western Pennsylvania, Kim Evert, said in an interview that the family planning and pro-choice organization has provided medical experts who are willing to talk about all aspects of the abortion procedure known medically as dilation and evacuation—which opponents of a woman’s right to choose inaccurately label “partial-birth abortion.”

“The individual records add no new information,” Evert said. “We are planning to fight this subpoena.”

The Justice Department is seeking records from six hospitals where doctors who have joined the challenge to the new law are working.

Evert said Planned Parenthood opposes the new law’s vague language, which could be applied to other abortion procedures,

including in early weeks of pregnancy. The law impinges on the physician’s need to be able to choose the best procedure for each patient.

When this reporter visited the Planned Parenthood office here, three young women were busy planning for local participation

in the March for Women’s Lives, which will take place in Washington D.C., on April 25.

Buses will leave from three points in the city, and campus women’s groups and unionists are forming delegations. Local organizers plan an afternoon of comedy,

music, and drama March 28 to publicize the action. For more information on the march, go to [www.marchforwomen.org](http://www.marchforwomen.org).

*Marty Ressler is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 23, and works in Arnold, Pennsylvania.*

## Pathfinder books are sought after at Houston Third World studies conference

BY STEVE WARSHALL AND BRIAN WILLIAMS

HOUSTON—At the February 16–21 conference of the National Association of African American Studies (NAAAS), university professors and students purchased dozens of Pathfinder books and pamphlets, totaling \$600.

The event, attended by more than 500 people, was a joint conference of NAAAS, National Association of Hispanic and Latino Studies, National Association of Native American Studies, and International Association of Asian Studies.

This was the third year in a row that Pathfinder has displayed literature at the NAAAS conference. The response this year was the best.

A number of the professors attending the event were already familiar with Pathfinder and had books in mind to be purchased both at the conference and later from the web site, [pathfinderpress.com](http://pathfinderpress.com). “Some of your books are priceless,” said a professor who specializes in Latin American history. “I tell people they get their money’s worth in the maps and photos alone.” The Pathfinder booth was filmed by a video crew attending the conference.

A group of students from Jackson State University in Mississippi purchased several pamphlets, including *Malcolm X Talks to Young People* and *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*. “You have books about all the important things here,” one said.

“I had no idea you could get books like this,” said a professor from Wright State University in Dayton, Ohio. She was particularly interested in the titles on the Cuban Revolution and those with speeches by Thomas Sankara, the leader of the 1983–87 revolution in the West African country of Burkina Faso.

A professor who teaches a class on Radical Reconstruction after the U.S. Civil War was interested in *Racism, Revolution and Reaction*, and *America’s Revolutionary*

*Heritage*, both of which take up this period in the U.S. class struggle.

A professor at a southwestern Texas community college was particularly interested in Spanish-language editions of *Aldabonazo*, *The Second Declaration of Havana*, *At the Side of Che Guevara*, *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*, and *Marianas in Combat* by Cuban general Teté Puebla for her language class. The crew staffing the Pathfinder booth sold her a catalog and explained how books could be ordered online.

Of the 36 Pathfinder titles sold, along with 14 catalogs, best sellers were *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning*, *Marianas in Combat*, *Socialism and Man in Cuba* by Che Guevara, and *February 1965: The Final Speeches* by Malcolm X.

## — 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —



March 23, 1979

With the same fervor they displayed in battling the shah, Iranian women have again burst into the streets. The revolution is not over, they declare; women want their full democratic rights.

The sustained mobilizations of women, which began on March 8, International Women’s Day, are the most dramatic demonstration yet that the Iranian masses are determined to win the rights so long denied them under the hated Pahlavi monarchy. By their actions, Iranian women are advancing the revolution as a whole—from the workers’ fight to control their factories to the peasants’ struggles for land to the demands of oppressed nationalities for control over their destinies.

The sight of tens of thousands of women marching down the streets of Tehran has also inspired supporters of women’s liberation around the world. These were not only the largest feminist actions to occur anywhere on International Women’s Day. The protests also marked the dawn of the women’s movement in Iran, a country whose domination by imperialism and monarchy has trapped women in backwardness for centuries.

What sparked the outpouring in Iran was a March 7 statement by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini that female government workers could not go “naked” to work, but “must be clothed according to Islamic standards”—the *chador*, or veil. The government had also made statements against equal rights for women in divorce, against coeducation, abortion, and laws outlawing polygamy.



March 22, 1954

What is the meaning of the appearance of opposition in the capitalist class to McCarthyite fascism? Did the Wisconsin demagogue overreach himself? Is he about to be smashed? The harsh fact is that such hopes are premature to say the least. Actually the fight against the American form of Hitlerism has just begun.

For some time those in the capitalist class who profess to believe in democratic political forms have been critical of the Wisconsin super-witch-hunter. The criticism, however, has mostly been perfunctory, amounting to not much more than grumbling for the sake of the record.

Then all at once they changed when McCarthy laid profane hands on the army brass.

The military caste in America today, as in Germany during Hitler’s rise, is a natural breeding ground for fascism. It would take little to start McCarthyism raging through its ranks like smallpox in pre-vaccination times.

To hand this powerful, career-minded force to the Wisconsin upstart would give his movement a qualitatively different weight on the national scene.

Thus the calculated attempt to McCarthyize the army forced a section of the capitalist class, primarily the Eastern section, to ask itself: is it prepared to strengthen native fascism that much today? Is it ready to turn to fascist rule now or in the immediate future? Or to turn the timing over to the judgment of this ambitious pupil of Hitler?

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# MARCH

## FOR WOMEN’S LIVES

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**10:00am: Assembly on Mall**

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Organizers: Black Women’s Health Imperative, Feminist Majority, NARAL Pro-Choice America, National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health, National Organization for Women (NOW), Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Cosponsoring Partners: Center for Reproductive Rights, National Abortion Federation, National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association, National Partnership for Women and Families, National Women’s Law Center

**[www.MarchforWomen.org](http://www.MarchforWomen.org)**  
**202-349-3838**



# U.S. troops out of Haiti!

The overthrow of the elected government of Haiti by rightist forces is a blow to working people. Today the wealthy rulers of the United States, along with those of France and Canada, have deployed troops to Haiti to patch together a government that can reliably protect imperialist interests there.

This is the third time in the past century that U.S. troops have intervened in Haiti for that purpose. After Washington asserted its domination of the country through its invasion and occupation in 1915, it propped up a string of dictators, including the bloody reign of terror under the Duvalier dynasty. Popular discontent grew, however, and by the mid-1980s the Duvalier tyranny had outlived its usefulness to imperialism. In 1986 working people rose up in a popular rebellion and ousted the dictatorship.

Bourgeois forces, however, stood at the head of this process. Jean-Bertrand Aristide, who had built a following through his outspoken opposition to the tyranny, was elected president on the crest of heightened hopes among working people for improvements in their conditions of life.

Because a naked dictatorship was no longer to their advantage, the U.S. rulers sought to use the Aristide government to maintain bourgeois stability and boost illusions in the capitalist system. When rightist military officers, seeking to return to the old days, toppled the elected government in 1991, Aristide turned to Washington for support. His reinstatement on the bayonets of 20,000 invading U.S. troops entailed a Faustian bargain: the price was increased subordination to Washington's prerogatives.

Back in power, the Aristide government willingly carried out Wall Street's demands to open up Haiti to greater imperialist penetration, relying more and more on thuggish methods against opponents. It became riddled with corruption, and its leaders became increasingly distanced from the brutal realities of life of the Haitian masses.

The Aristide government was never a representative of working people, not even one that betrayed their interests. It did not "push the toilers to the sidelines," as a *Militant* headline said in an earlier issue—a phrase that could imply that somehow Aristide was a misleader at the head of a movement of the exploited. The regime simply acted like the capitalist government that it was.

As a result, protests began to mount—both by workers and farmers and by bourgeois forces competing with the regime and each other for power. The rightists seized on the widespread discontent to make their move and successfully organized a coup. Despite statements by Aristide and by radical organizations in the United States that describe the events as a "U.S. coup," there is no evidence that the revolt began with imperialism. While often applying economic and political pressure to get the regime to toe the line over the past few years, until the coup the U.S. rulers had

preferred to rely on the Aristide government to defend their interests and investments against working people.

What's more, the "leftist" opposition to Aristide, including Stalinists and social democrats, made the fatal mistake of failing to take into account the rightist danger as they campaigned against the government. The events show that it's not enough to oppose a government and denounce corruption—the ultrarightists did so too, and more effectively. As a result, the most reactionary forces easily overtook the bourgeois reformers.

As the crisis deepened and the government proved increasingly unable to guarantee stable bourgeois rule, Washington pressed it to compromise with the rightists. But the latter gained ground as the regime failed to organize a defense, having already disarmed itself by dissolving the Haitian army in 1995—a gift to U.S. imperialism that contributed to its undoing. Washington finally decided to dump Aristide, no longer useful to its interests. The outcome was inevitable.

Today, liberal supporters of Aristide in the United States—including Democratic politicians, who were the most aggressive in campaigning for another U.S. invasion of Haiti, all in the name of defending the former president—complain that he was "kidnapped" by Washington. But whether he was physically forced into exile or he handed a resignation letter to U.S. officials before getting on the plane does not change the more important fact that from the beginning his administration was totally subordinate to U.S. imperialism.

It will take time for workers and farmers in Haiti to absorb the lessons of this setback and, through experiences in struggle, develop a political leadership of their own. In this process, one vital lesson that will be drawn is that our class can never look to any imperialist government as an ally, nor to some capitalist figure or party representing the employer class. Working people will only be able to get rid of all the exploiters, foreign and domestic, by organizing their struggles independently of the employers, and charting a program that does not simply oppose the existing order but offers a strategy to replace it with one in the interests of the producing classes.

That is how the July 26 Movement and Rebel Army of Cuba were able to lead working people in their millions to overthrow a U.S.-backed dictatorship in 1959 and carry out a socialist revolution, successfully defending their revolutionary gains for the past 45 years.

Working people in the United States and around the world should join with our Haitian brothers and sisters in demanding:

U.S., French, and Canadian troops out of Haiti now!

Cancel Haiti's foreign debt to the imperialist bankers!

Stop the U.S. government's arrests and detentions of Haitian immigrants and refugees!

payroll survey, which is based on responses from 400,000 companies, shows a loss of 2.2 million jobs since early 2001. By contrast, the household survey, drawing on responses from 50,000 households, shows an increase of 500,000 jobs over the same period.

Federal Reserve Board chairman Alan Greenspan told Congress last month that he increasingly considers the payroll survey to provide the more accurate read of the unemployment situation.

The March 8 *Wall Street Journal* found something to cheer in this picture. The "positive news," it said, is the "continued improvements in productivity as companies find ways to raise output without expanding their work forces. While painful for many workers these productivity gains have helped boost corporate profits."

Joshua Shapiro, an analyst at a new York economic research firm, put it more bluntly. "This is a different cycle," Shapiro said of the recovery. "To the extent that companies can squeeze another drop of blood out of their existing work force, they're doing it. Eventually you reach the point where there's no more blood to be given, but we haven't reached it yet."

# Grand Opening

Continued from Page 4

apartheid army's invasions in the 1970s and '80s. In addition, she said, there are now 10,000 Venezuelan students attending classes in Cuba. The campaign to make classic works of literature available to working people, which started as part of the Battle of Ideas effort in Cuba, has now been extended to Venezuela. Some 1.2 million copies of world literary classics have been printed for distribution in Venezuela.

## Aldabonazo book launchings

The main Pathfinder title featured at the Havana book fair was *Aldabonazo: Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground 1952-1958* by Armando Hart, one of the historic leaders of the Cuban Revolution. The title was launched at the book fair and at two other meetings in Havana. At the meetings Hart described how he and others of his generation became socialists during the rising revolutionary struggle in the 1950s. The revolutionary leader explained that he and others had never been anticommunist but rather revolutionaries who were anti-Stalinist, and that it was legitimate to recognize that Leon Trotsky was one of the central leaders of the Russian Revolution of October 1917.

Many of those who came to the Pathfinder booth, Waters said, wanted to know, "Who are you? Where do you come from? How are you able to write these kind of books?" She said, "We told them we publish books like *Rebelión Teamster* because workers in the United States need them." Such questions provided opportunities to describe the work that communists carry out in the United States and other imperialist countries.

Róger Calero introduced Olivia Nelson, who together with *Militant* editor Argiris Malapanis will be part of a reporting team to Venezuela and will attend the convention of the youth organization of the Fifth Republic Movement, the ruling party in Venezuela. Calero also reported that two other Young Socialists, Paul Pederson from the United States and Ogmundur Jónsson from Iceland, would attend a solidarity mission in Palestine organized by the World Federation of Democratic Youth, and that YS members Jacob Perasso and Romina Green would be part of a U.S. group at a youth seminar in Cuba in March.

Nelson said that Washington had been stepping up its offensive against Venezuela, with White House officials charging Caracas with acting together with Havana to "destabilize democratic countries" in South America. Washington has backed a recall referendum drive by pro-imperialist opponents of the government aimed at removing President Hugo Chávez from office. "But in Venezuela working people have become more tested through their struggles, and there will be resistance to imperialist-organized intervention there," Nelson said. She encouraged efforts to begin now to build participation in the 2005 World Youth Festival, which will be held in Caracas.

Barnes next introduced Bill Estrada, a striking coal miner from Utah. Estrada had been fired from his job because he supported the effort by workers at the mine to join the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). His co-workers walked out in response to his firing and have been on strike since September.

Before Estrada spoke, Barnes noted that competence in strike leadership is one of the most difficult qualities to gain. It involves learning that your actions have real consequences for those involved in the struggle.

Barnes said that the series of books written by Farrell Dobbs on the 1930s fight to build the Teamsters union in the Midwest is not about building a social movement, but about the possibilities that are opened up along that road when a strike is competently led. "When a number of strikes are won," Barnes said, "a broader layer of working-class leaders can develop and gain confidence to reach out to and speak out on broader social issues."

In Minnesota in 1934, the workers started the struggle and then drew in the union, Barnes said. That's the case at the Co-Op mine in Utah, he explained, and the miners have maintained that relationship.

This is different from the approach of building an "alternative leadership," the SWP leader said, or of looking for a social movement where none exists. "It is a course of action that draws in those workers who want to fight to win the strike." That course enabled strike leaders and revolutionary socialists Farrell Dobbs and Ray Dunne to win workers along this line, including those like union official Pat Corcoran, who had been sent in by the Teamsters International leadership to bust up the Minneapolis local's militant leadership. Because Corcoran wanted to see the workers win the strike, and saw that the way it was being led made that possible, he became a loyal member of the organizing campaign, and a union martyr when he was killed under mysterious circumstances in 1937.

Today the strike by miners in Utah to be represented by the UMWA is the most important labor action in the country, said Barnes. It is the most important because it is possible to win it and, through a victory, open up more possibilities for labor.

Estrada gave a concrete feel for how the strikers are taking steps to strengthen their picket line and reach out for support from UMWA locals and the labor movement. He talked about lessons miners had learned through their experiences about how to strengthen their union.

## Bush avoiding course of ultraright

Barnes also reviewed the historic trends that undermine capitalist profit rates. He said the recent proposals floated by Federal Reserve Board chairman Alan Greenspan "are a softening up of the beaches" by the U.S. rulers for an offensive on Social Security to be able to take back significant parts of the social wage of working people and widen the divisions in the working class.

Barnes said that despite the claims of liberals and middle-class radicals, the Bush White House is a centrist, not rightist, administration. It is doing everything possible to avoid the course of the ultrarightist backers of the "culture war." To do otherwise would mean they could not hold together the Republican base to win in November.

With its grandstanding call for a constitutional amendment on marriage, Barnes said by way of example, "the administration is taking a token position on gay marriage that can't win." There is virtually no chance that such a constitutional amendment would be adopted, he pointed out.

The administration's course has two objectives, Barnes said. One is to transform the U.S. military along the lines of the Special Forces to be able to respond more rapidly to threats to imperialist domination around the world. The second is to advance the "war on terrorism" against the rights of working people in the United States.

Barnes noted that it is the struggles of working people like the union-organizing drives of meat packers in the Midwest and coal miners in Utah that are the greatest obstacle in this country to Washington's campaigns. Because of the potential of the coal miners' fight, he added, the meetings of socialist workers in the unions to be held in the weeks ahead will orient toward winning further support in the labor movement for the strikers in Utah.

Barnes invited friends and supporters of the Socialist Workers Party to the national convention of the party in June in Oberlin, Ohio, to discuss the political themes of the Grand Opening weekend and meet others involved in working-class struggles.

Barnes concluded by announcing the decision of the *Militant* editors to launch an ambitious campaign to expand the circulation of the socialist press, and to halve the price of the introductory *Militant* subscription to \$5, to maximize taking advantage of the increased interest among working people in these publications.

He also asked for initial pledges toward the \$85,000 *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* fund drive. Participants pledged \$25,000 at the meeting.

# Workers face job losses

Continued from front page

level of 5.6 percent. In addition, the figures show that the average period of unemployment increased to 20 weeks—the longest since 1984.

The new jobs all involve hiring by the government. Payrolls at private companies did not rise at all. Meanwhile, some 24,000 workers lost jobs in construction while factories laid off another 3,000 workers—the 43rd consecutive monthly drop in manufacturing.

Commenting on the report, the March 6 *New York Times* noted that companies are "reluctant to add workers even though the economy grew at an annual rate of 6.1 percent during the second half of last year—the fastest pace in almost two decades."

The labor bureau survey also noted that hiring in November and December was weaker than previously reported. Those figures were adjusted down from 16,000 to 8,000 new jobs in November and from 112,000 to 97,000 in December. Until August, the number of jobs was actually shrinking.

The latest figures have sharpened debate on the methods for calculating the jobless rate. The labor department employs two methods, producing differing results. The



# New Jersey day laborers win initial victory

BY SARA LOBMAN

FREEHOLD, New Jersey—Immigrant day laborers have won an initial victory in their fight for the right to live and work in this central New Jersey town. On February 2 the Borough of Freehold announced it would immediately repeal its loitering ordinance and a law that allowed people to be ticketed and fined at an “officer’s discretion,” admitting both were illegal.

Along with declaring the local “muster zone” off limits at the beginning of the year, local officials have used the two practices as part of a campaign to harass Latino workers and their families. Last year’s decision to close the zone sparked protests by the day laborers and their supporters.

Established four years ago by borough officials eager to move day laborers out of the town center, the zone became an important assembly point for the workers as they sought jobs from construction contractors.

Since January 1, the workers, most of whom are immigrants from Mexico and other Latin American countries, have been gathering at a hall in the Second Baptist Church offered until the end of March by Rev. Andre McGuire. More than a quarter of Freehold’s population of 11,000 people is Latino—up from 12 percent in 1990.

The February 2 decision was in response to a lawsuit filed on behalf of six day laborers against the closure of the zone. A February 6 hearing on the suit—launched by the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund (PRLDEF)—was postponed at the request of borough officials.

Workers told *Militant* reporters that while they regard the repeal of the loitering and “officer’s discretion” measures as a victory, the fight is not over. In particular, the muster zone remains closed.

Cesar Perales, executive director of PRLDEF, said in a February 14 phone interview that “the agreement by the borough to stop issuing tickets for ‘officer’s discretion’ doesn’t stop other forms of police harassment.”

As part of its campaign against the workers, Freehold implemented a “quality of life” enforcement program in June 2003. Additional police were hired to enforce rarely used laws on littering, overcrowding, housing code violations, and abandoned vehicles. According to Freehold mayor Michael Wilson, a special court session to deal exclusively with these charges had netted some \$127,000 from fines and penalties by early October 2003.

Also part of the anti-immigrant campaign is an organization called PEOPLE (Pressing our Elected Officials to Protect our Living Environment), launched by Michael LeVine, a former Freehold borough councilman. LeVine modeled PEOPLE on Sachem Quality of Life, a rightist group that has waged an aggressive campaign against immigrant workers in Long Island, New York.



Militant/Sara Lobman

**Day laborers and supporters in Freehold, New Jersey, march January 18 to demand the town government reopen “muster zone” and cease harassment of immigrants.**

Workers, meanwhile, are organizing to improve their conditions of work. According to Alejandro Abarca, one of the day laborers and a leader of the Workers Committee for Progress and Social Benefits,

they decided to insist on a basic hourly rate of \$10 from the contractors. Workers with specific skills get \$14. Each job, Abarca said, must include a guarantee of at least five hours’ work.

## Florida meeting marks year since arrest of Sami Al-Arian, opposes frame-up

BY KARL BUTTS

TAMPA, Florida—“This is about the prosecution and persecution of a Palestinian activist advocating for Palestinians,” said Linda Moreno, speaking at a February 20 meeting in Tampa to protest the frame-up of Sami Al-Arian and three others. The meeting was held to mark the first anniversary of their arrest on phony “terrorism” charges.

Moreno is one of the lawyers representing the former University of South Florida (USF) professor, who was fired from his teaching job shortly after his arrest. “Our defense is the First Amendment—freedom of political speech,” Moreno said.

Others arrested at the same time as Al-Arian were Sameeh Hammoudeh, Hatim Naji Fariz, and Ghassan Zayed Ballut. They face a 50-count federal indictment—many of these charges are for “conspiracy.”

Held on the USF campus, the meeting was attended by 120 people. It was sponsored by the Muslim Students Association, Sisters United Muslim Association, the Arab American Student Alliance and Leadership, and the campus chapter of Amnesty International. Dr. Agha Saeed of the American Muslim Alliance and Marty Rosenbloom of Amnesty International also spoke. Anniversary events were also held in Chicago and Falls Church, Virginia.

“Though [Al-Arian] is not convicted of anything, he’s treated in the most degrading and atrocious fashion,” Moreno said. The conditions of pre-trial detention have included 23-hour lockdown, strip searches, use of chains and shackles, and restriction

to noncontact visits only from immediate family members. The abuse and mistreatment can even extend to Al-Arian’s lawyers, Moreno said. In a recent episode, they met with him in a holding cell to review some of the hundreds of thousands of documents in the case. The guards told them, “You can sit on the floor to examine the documents,” she said.

According to a letter from the Tampa Bay Coalition for Justice and Peace, the head of the U.S. Marshal Service in Tampa handcuffed and chained Al-Arian’s co-defendant and cell-mate Sameeh Hammoudeh on February 13 as he was praying.

### Guilt by association

In a January 21 hearing in Tampa’s federal court on a defense motion to dismiss the charges, defense attorney William Moffitt argued that the government had built its “terrorism” indictment on guilt by association, attempting to connect the defendants with Palestinian Islamic Jihad. The government claims that Al-Arian is a key fund-raiser for the Palestinian organization, and its most prominent U.S. representative.

Steering clear of any claim that the defendants were involved in violent acts, the indictment says that they supported and applauded such acts by “speaking to others about events and receiving information on events in Palestine,” he said.

In another hearing the next day, U.S. Magistrate Judge Thomas McCoun ordered prosecutors to turn over English transcripts of about 200 out of 21,000 hours of taped

The day laborers monitor this system themselves. One of them greets the contractors, finds out their labor needs, and explains the pay scale. He then calls into the center where the next workers on the rotating list are offered the jobs. The workers are also organizing English classes and classes on health and safety at the center. “These are open to all Latino workers and their families, not just the day laborers,” Abarca said.

The workers have spoken to meetings of the National Day Laborers Network, the Monmouth County Residents for Immigrant Rights, and the Newark Militant Labor Forum to win support for their fight.

On January 31 they participated in a teach-in titled “The War at Home and the War Abroad” sponsored by the New Jersey Civil Rights Defense Committee.

The Second Baptist Church has set up a fund for the workers. Checks should be made out to “I Beseech Thee/ Labor Program” and mailed to the Second Baptist Church, 133 Throckmorton St., Freehold, NJ 07728. For more information, call (732) 492-3317.

conversations, along with other evidence. He rejected a request from Hatim Naji Fariz, however, that English transcripts for the rest of the tapes be made available to the defendants.

The trial is not scheduled to start until the beginning of 2005, by which time the defendants will have been jailed for close to two years.



**Sami Al-Arian speaking to reporters in August 2002. The Palestinian activist has been locked up for a year on frame-up charges of conspiracy.**

## LETTERS

### Slavery in Cuba

I just wanted to ask about a factual statement that appeared in the Feb. 9, 2004, issue of the *Militant*.

In the article, “Radical reorganization and cutback of Cuba’s sugar industry” it states that “Almost 600,000 slaves were brought into Cuba between 1816 and 1867, more than were brought to the United States over the entire period of the slave trade.”

The lowest estimate I’ve seen of slaves brought to the United States is 600,000–900,000, which is based on a commonly used figure of “six percent” of the total number of Africans brought to the Western Hemisphere. But that is if there were 10–15 million slaves in the slave trade.

Recently for Black History Month, I read an article by John Belisle called, “Black Slavery and Capitalism” published in an Education for Socialists docu-

ment on *Studies in Afro-American History*. There he writes, “It was at this juncture that the commercial nations of Western Europe turned to what became the central axis of their economic development for 200 years—taking the land stolen from the Indians and working it with labor stolen from Africa. With this came the most extensive slave trade in the history of the world.”

“By conservative estimates 20,000,000 or, by more expansive estimates, 50,000,000 slaves were transported from Africa to the Western Hemisphere during this period. On this basis was laid the foundations of modern capitalism.”

But whatever the total, the vast majority of slaves did end up in Brazil and the countries of the Caribbean. And, as the article points out, Cuba and Brazil were the last two countries in the Americas to outlaw the use of slave labor.

Janet Post  
Hazleton, Pennsylvania

[The source used in the article is *Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution 1868–1898* by Ada Ferrer. It states on page two of the introduction, “More than 595,000 [slaves] arrived on the island’s shores in the last fifty years of the [slave] trade, between 1816 and 1867—about as many as ever arrived in the United States over the whole period of the trade (523,000).”—*Editor*]

### ‘Defeat Bush’

I write this letter both as an ally in the struggle for Marxist socialism and as an adversary to your election strategy. I understand that the belief within your party is that: voting for a Democrat—a member and tool of a reactionary party of the capitalist class—is contrary to Marxism and is “reformist.” While I certainly agree that the Democratic Party is both reactionary and a party of capitalism, I hold that voting for one of its members is

not necessarily the “reformism as an ideology” (rather than: reformism as a tactic) that we Marxists struggle against.

Upon examination of our nation’s working-class, we see that the vast majority of its members are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the American political landscape. At the same time, it is also clear that this same majority is sticking with the Democratic Party.

If we wish to build a real and powerful socialist movement in the USA, it will depend on the support of the masses. As Lenin put it: “To throw only the vanguard into the decisive battle, before the entire class, the broad masses, have taken up a position either of direct support for the vanguard, or at least of sympathetic neutrality towards it and of precluded support for the enemy, would be not merely foolish but criminal.

“Propaganda and agitation alone

are not enough for an entire class, the broad masses of the working people, those oppressed by capital, to take up such a stand. For that, the masses must have their own political experience.”

A broad coalition (the All-People’s Front) against Bush and the ultra-right will build a foundation for the socialist movement of the future. It will solidify ties between working-class forces and give the masses the political experience needed for the battle that is to come—the battle for socialism!  
Shane C. Brinton  
Northern California

**The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.**

**Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.**



# New Zealand: Maori protest landgrab

BY JANET ROTH

AHIPARA, New Zealand—Some 2,000 people lined up along the beach at Ahipara, Northland, February 7 to affirm Maori ownership of the foreshore and seabed here and oppose the latest government efforts to rob them of this land.

The action was organized by the local Maori tribe, Te Rarawa. Earlier that day 300 people attended a ceremony to unveil a

*pouwhenua* (marker pole) beside the beach to symbolize customary Maori ownership. Several hours were set aside for an open forum in the morning followed by a concert in the afternoon.

Last December, the government announced that in 2004 it would introduce new legislation to place ownership of the foreshore and seabed in the hands of the state—what it calls the “public domain”—

and thereby extinguish Maori rights to seek or maintain private title. Maori communities currently own 10 percent of the land on New Zealand’s coastline.

Opposition to the Labour Party government’s proposals was also expressed February 5–6 at events commemorating the 1840 signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. Protests included a youthful march of 400 at Waitangi itself, which is a town in the north of

the North Island. This treaty between the British Crown and some Maori chiefs is promoted by the ruling class as New Zealand’s founding document. Maori have also long cited the treaty as a legal basis for the assertion of their national rights.

Maori, an oppressed nationality, are the indigenous people of New Zealand, comprising as much as 15 percent of the population.

Opposition leader Donald Brash of the National Party also drew anger for a widely publicized speech he made January 27 calling for an end to what he claimed were laws granting “special privileges” to Maori.

The government has been under fire from Maori groups for its June 2003 overturning of a Court of Appeal decision that would have allowed them to go to court to claim ownership of areas of the foreshore and seabed. Maori tribes in the South Island’s Nelson-Marlborough region and elsewhere have been denied licenses in the growing marine farming industry.

The Court of Appeal decision was a result of their efforts to redress this discrimination.

To justify robbing yet more land, government and opposition politicians alike demagogically claimed that should Maori be granted ownership of the foreshore and seabed, they would deny “ordinary New Zealanders” access to the beaches. Growing tracts of the coastline are in fact becoming private property through investment in private marinas, golf courses, luxury beachfront dwellings, tourist ventures, aquaculture, and the like. Maori in the main have not benefited from this, any more than have other working people.

Under its proposed new legislation, the government will limit customary rights to traditional practices such as the protection of burial sites.

Moana Jackson, an attorney for Maori seeking rights to the foreshore and seabed, pointed out in the February 26 *New Zealand Herald* that the government plan “removes the ability of Maori to have their rights advocated in court” and would restrict them “to some quaint anthropological practices.” National Party leader Brash has opposed even these concessions.

In a move designed to preempt the government’s legislation, Maori at Potaka Marae on the North Island’s east coast have opened their own aquaculture center without official permits.

This is a region where Maori still control most of the coastline, as depicted in the movie *Whale Rider*.

## Sinn Fein event marks gains in Irish struggle

BY PETE CLIFFORD

DUBLIN, Ireland—“This party is once again in the eye of the storm; the process of change has been set to one side” said Gerry Adams at Sinn Fein’s February 27–29 *Ard Fheis*, or national conference. The party president was referring to the British government’s nearly 18-month suspension of the Northern Ireland Assembly, and statements by Irish government leaders and media commentators that have sharply targeted Sinn Fein and its growth in support.

Some 2,000 delegates and visitors attended the annual gathering. They came from across Ireland, ranging from long-term fighters against British rule to members of Ogra Shinn Fein, the youth group of Sinn Fein, the party leading the fight for the withdrawal of British troops from the north and for a united Ireland.

The days leading up to the gathering were marked by shrill propaganda attacks on the nationalist organization in the Irish media. Irish prime minister Bartholomew Ahern claimed that Adams was a member of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), which is still officially illegal.

“The growing ferocity of the criticism is not unrelated to the imminent European elections and local elections,” stated an editorial in Dublin’s *Sunday Business Post*.

In his keynote address, Adams condemned the British government’s suspension of the assembly—established in 1998 under the Good Friday Agreement—and its obstruction of further negotiations. The agreement “has been too big a challenge for the British government,” he said.

The Sinn Fein leader pointed to the hypocrisy of London’s insistence—echoed by the pro-British unionist parties—that the IRA must surrender all its weapons to get the so-called peace process back on track. “Where stands the promised demilitarization of our society when the British Army is still in occupation of republican heartlands?” he asked.

“The murder of citizens through collusion with unionist death squads has been and remains British state policy in Ireland,” said Adams. “The apparatus is still in existence.” He welcomed to the platform several relatives of those killed by the unionist death squads that have operated with London’s collusion, and pointed to the importance of the *An Fhirinne* (the truth) campaign that they have organized. Through pickets and protest rallies, the relatives have continued to demand that London come clean about its involvement in the murders.

Despite London’s stalling, said Adams, “we are still in a far better place than we were 10 years ago. Remember, this party was censored, denied the use of municipal buildings in Dublin, and party members were killed.”

The plans of the British rulers for the “peace process” had gone awry, he said. They had hoped that the so-called moderate parties—the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) on the nationalist side and the Ulster Unionist Party on the side championing British rule—would build a dominant popular following.

Instead, the situation has become more polarized, with Sinn Fein extending its support at the SDLP’s expense and the Democratic Unionist Party, led by rightist demagogue Ian Paisley, replacing the Ulster



Militant/Antonis Parnasis

**Relatives of victims of pro-British death squads join Sinn Fein at February protest in London against the collusion of the British government with killings.**

Unionists as the main pro-British party.

Michelle Gildernew, the party’s member of British parliament for Northern Ireland’s Fermanagh and South Tyrone, reinforced Adams’s point about the British military presence. Her area “is still blighted by spy posts both overt and covert and huge military bases,” she said. The cops “travel round in armored jeeps and operate from military barracks.... The apparatus of war is staring us in the face every day of the week,” she said.

One participant at the *Ard Fheis* described the recent increase in daily stop-and-search harassment operations by British soldiers.

With their eyes on the Republic as well as the north, speakers touched on some aspects of developments there.

Many delegates commented on the influx

of immigrant labor. Like most European cities, Dublin now has a substantial immigrant population. The *Independent* reports that 40 percent of workers in horticulture are from Eastern Europe, most holding work permits only. Delegates from the north told this reporter that large numbers of Portuguese and East Europeans work in the meatpacking plants there.

The Sinn Fein candidate in the European elections for the north of Ireland, Bairbre de Brun, discussed the bitter reality of the vaunted economic growth in the Irish capitalist economy. “Farming incomes, north and south, are lower now than they have been in a decade,” she said. Many small producers can only survive with grants from the European Union, price supports, and other aids through the Common Agricultural Policy.

## U.S. gov’t holds up funds for ‘Free the Cuban 5’ ad

BY PATRICK O’NEILL

In an attack on constitutional rights, the U.S. Treasury Department recently blocked funds donated for the publication of a full-page advertisement in the *New York Times* demanding the release of five Cuban revolutionaries jailed in the United States. The government eventually backed down and unfroze the funds, which had been contributed by Cuba solidarity groups in Spain and France.

Fernando González, René González, Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández, and Ramón Labañino are serving from 15 years to a double life term. They were framed up and convicted in 2001 on conspiracy charges, including conspiracy to commit espionage, to act as unregistered foreign agents, and—in the case of Hernández—to commit murder. The five had been gathering information on ultrarightist Cuban-American groups that, operating on U.S. territory, have organized violent attacks on Cuba with the full knowledge and complicity of the U.S. government—groups that have been funded and in some cases created by Washington. The frame-up of the five takes place in the context of attacks on political rights carried out by the U.S. government under the banner of “homeland security” and “fighting terrorism.”

In a February 25 statement the San Francisco-based National Committee to Free the Cuban Five reported, “The U.S. Department of Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), in conjunction with Wachovia Bank, has recently prevented the National Committee from receiving two wire transfers sent to it from two Cuban Five support committees.” These were a Cuba solidarity organization in Andalusia, Spain, and the French Committee to Free the Cuban Five.

“Neither OFAC nor Wachovia has explained why they have unlawfully denied the National Committee access to these funds,” the committee said in its statement. “Instead they have demanded that the groups involved answer intrusive questions about the work they do on Cuba and the case of the Five.”

Organizers of the ad campaign, it said, “have been fighting hard to reverse the U.S. government’s decision to suspend these funds. We believe that the government’s action violates the First Amendment and constitutes another attack on the Cuban Five.”

In a March 5 phone interview Ian Thompson, an attorney for the National Committee to Free the Five, said that OFAC had probed for additional information on

the account used for the ad campaign. Among other questions, he said, “They wanted to know the relationship of the account to the Cuban government and the reason for the payment.”

On March 5 committee coordinator Gloria La Riva told the *Militant* that although OFAC had eventually backed down, “It doesn’t mean they won’t do it again.”

The full-page ad, which appeared in the March 3 *Times*, summarized some of the facts in the frame-up of the Cuban Five. It also protested Washington’s repeated denials of visas to Olga Salanueva, wife of René González, and Adriana Pérez, wife of Gerardo Hernández, to visit their imprisoned husbands.

The ad quoted Leonard Weinglass, the attorney for Antonio Guerrero, who said, “Justice demands a new trial.” Weinglass and other attorneys for the five will present brief verbal arguments for their written appeals against the convictions at a March 10 hearing of the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in Miami.

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